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## Media Release

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### EQUINE GENETICS RESEARCH CENTRE

Australian racing's first equine genetics research laboratory service is to be established at the centre of one of Australia's premier Thoroughbred horse breeding districts, the Chair of Racing Australia, Ms Frances Nelson QC announced today.

The Equine Genetics Research Centre will be located at Scone in the Hunter Valley of New South Wales.

*"Locating these new laboratory facilities in the heart of one of Australia's internationally-recognised breeding regions makes perfect sense given the vital functions it will perform for the Australian Thoroughbred racing industry,"* said Ms Nelson.

*"The work of the Centre will be critical to the ongoing integrity of Australian racing. Its DNA testing underpins both the breeding and racing sectors of our sport."*

*"To ensure the Centre met world standards, Racing Australia worked with the International Society of Animal Genetics to successfully gain approval and institutional membership,"* Ms Nelson concluded.

The new facility will be established within Scone's Hunter Valley Equine Research Centre complex and is expected to be operational by April 2018. Building works are due to be completed by the end of this year.

Chairman of the Hunter Valley Equine Research Centre, Bill Rose welcomed the new facility.

*"The establishment of the Equine Genetics Research Centre in Scone brings enhanced integrity to Australian racing and breeding and we are delighted Racing Australia has made the decision to establish a world class facility in the heart of our Thoroughbred breeding region"* Mr Rose said.

The Centre will undertake DNA typing of all Thoroughbred foals to confirm parentage and establish a unique pedigree that is accessible throughout its life. It will also provide services to 30 other horse breed societies across Australia. An estimated 20,000 tests will be analysed at the Centre each year.

Ms Nelson also announced that Dr Natasha Hamilton had been appointed by Racing Australia as the inaugural Director of the Equine Genetics Research Centre.

Dr Hamilton has worked at the University of Sydney as a researcher and lecturer, most recently teaching neurophysiology & equine science within the Faculty of Science.

She is also a contributing member of the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities' Gene Doping Control Subcommittee, the International Equine Genome Mapping Workshop and the International Society of Animal Genetics.

*"I am very grateful for the opportunity to become a contributing member of the industry that I have loved for so long and I am particularly excited about the research possibilities of this role. I look forward to working closely with industry participants to ensure Australia's racing industry continues to be the world's leading Thoroughbred industry,"* Dr Hamilton said.

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